

Nevada County Transportation Commission

The Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC) is the Regional Transportation Planning Agency for Nevada County. NCTC coordinates state and federal transportation programs for Nevada County, the City of Grass Valley, Nevada City, and the Town of Truckee.

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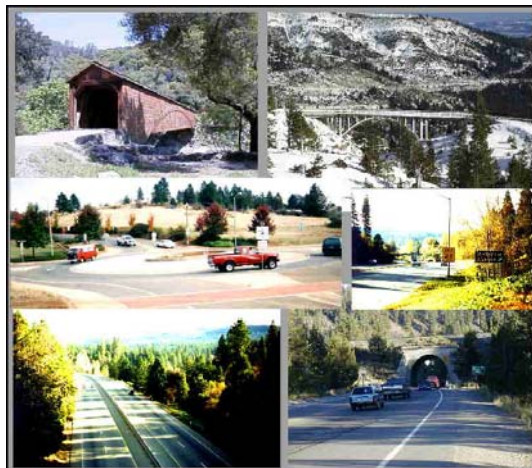
Upcoming NCTC Meeting

The next meeting of the Nevada County Transportation Commission is scheduled on:

Wednesday, July 18, 2007 at 9:00 a.m., Truckee Town Council Chambers, 10183 Truckee Airport Road, Truckee, CA.

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NEVADA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION NEWSLETTER

Issue 32

"Creating a better future by building upon successes of the past"

June 2007



Safety Knows No Season

The "safety" of Nevada County residents is always foremost in the minds of the Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC). When transportation projects are discussed, attention is focused on identifying safety issues. This newsletter highlights some of the safety enhancing projects currently underway in Nevada County.

The "Caltrans Safety Index" is triggered when numerous factors such as accidents, traffic volumes, visibility issues, and traffic citations, are identified at a specific highway location. The State Highway Operations and Protection Program (SHOPP) is a special Caltrans account that is utilized to fund projects to improve the safety of state highways. The current *Safety Realignment and Widening of SR 20 at Pet Hill* is one of those projects. Funded by SHOPP funds the project improvements include standard eight foot shoulders, left-turn lanes at various locations, improved drainage, eastbound passing and truck-climbing lanes, construction of two bridges, and realignment of the highway in two locations between Mooney Flat Road and Melody Road.

The Project Study Report, completed in October 2001, reported the purpose of the project was to upgrade current roadway standards and reduce potential for accidents. The report indicated the three year accident data for that segment was 83% higher than the statewide average, and the fatal and injury accident rate was 159% higher. Curves in the road are to be straightened for greater visibility and to allow safe travel at current speed limits. The truck climbing lane will allow heavy trucks to travel at a reduced rate without posing a passing danger. Left-turn lanes are planned to help eliminate rear-end accidents.

By the time the project went out to bid in 2006 there was a \$10 million deficit of



SR 20 "safety project" begins 4 miles east of the Yuba County line



Rock and gravel are laid to create the widened roadbed on the SR 20 Realignment and Widening Project

funds due to a dramatic increase in the cost of asphalt and construction materials. The California Transportation Commission (CTC) approved the additional funds at their September 2006 meeting and Granite Construction was awarded the project. The total cost of the project is \$36.3 million, and completion is scheduled for the end of 2008.

[Photos courtesy of Caltrans District 3]

"Safety" continued on pgs. 2 & 3

Safety Projects in Nevada County - Continued

Safety takes on many forms in Nevada County. Improvements at intersections to provide traffic congestion relief, accident prevention, speed limit controls, and non-motorized modes of transportation, are all topics discussed at NCTC meetings that may later become NCTC projects. Here are some examples of safety-related projects in the County.

With the increase in population and the added strain on Nevada County roads to accommodate additional traffic, the number of injury/fatal accidents caused an outcry to provide safer roadways. NCTC and Caltrans answered this by designing and implementing projects such as the rumble strip on SR 49 this past January (see March 2006 NCTC newsletter), and the widening project on SR 20 near the Yuba County line that is featured on the cover of this newsletter. A third project in the planning stages is the SR 49/La Barr Meadows Road signalization and widening project (see the March 2007 NCTC newsletter). Accident statistics on SR 49 near the La Barr Meadows Road project were a factor in choosing this location to be Phase I of a plan to widen SR 49 from the Wolf/Combie Road intersection to the McKnight Way interchange in Grass Valley, as funds become available. Caltrans will conduct an open house this summer to allow the community an opportunity to review and comment on the current plans for the La Barr Meadows Road project.

The portion of SR 49 between McKnight Way in Grass Valley and Dry Creek Road in Auburn was designated as an “official safety corridor” on June 16, 2006, due to twelve fatal accidents that occurred in 2005. This designation brought with it



Safety Corridor sign installed in 2006 on SR 49

\$500,000 in funds for safety improvements that helped to fund installation of reflective markers with a median rumble strip, additional speed limit and safety signage, and additional striping of the highway.

The Nevada County Department of Public Works (formerly DOTS) has plans this summer for several shoulder improvement projects. One project is to install six foot paved shoulders on Brunswick Road from Wood Rose Way to the Y intersection at SR 174. Another project will be to improve and widen various shoulder locations on Wolf Road from SR 49 to Garden Bar Road. This summer the County will widen the road to provide gravel shoulders. Next summer they will do additional shoulder widening on roads adjacent to and connecting with Wolf Road.

Nevada City recently retained LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc. to look at ways to improve the heavy traffic flow at the intersection of Zion Street/Ridge Road/Nevada City Highway. With three schools located nearby, the need to provide safe access to the schools is also a high priority in the study. A preliminary design was approved by the Nevada City Council and a final design is in progress. Construction will be completed this summer on a short-term solution. With the Nevada City Tech Park under construction at the end of Providence Mine Road, long-term improvements to accommodate the additional traffic will require a more extensive study. The sales tax measure recently passed in Nevada City will partially fund construction of the short-term project.

The City of Grass Valley is working with NCTC and Caltrans to provide a convenient access to the Sierra Nevada Hospital, Sierra College, and Nevada Union High School through the planning of the Dorsey Drive Interchange. This project will provide bike lanes and sidewalks on the bridge and approaches, as well as relieve some of the heavy traffic flow at the Brunswick and Idaho-Maryland intersections of SR 49/20.



Dorsey Drive overpass where bike lanes and sidewalks are proposed

The City of Grass Valley has a Traffic Safety Committee that is implementing traffic calming projects in several locations. The public is invited to submit requests to the Engineering Department by phone, a letter, or fill out a form on their website.

The Town of Truckee is working in cooperation with NCTC and Caltrans to proceed with plans to widen the SR 89 Mousehole, which will improve safety for vehicles and pedestrians. Progress is slow due to the environmental constraints caused by a nearby creek and a rock embankment adjacent to the project. Another challenge facing the project is planning how to construct the widened structure without impeding rail travel.



SR 89 Mousehole in Truckee before caution lights were installed

Safety Projects in Nevada County - Continued

Transit riders have expressed safety concerns when they access transit stops located in high traffic locations. NCTC secured grant funds for a study to identify an area to relocate the Transit Transfer Station from the current downtown Grass Valley location. A Project Advisory Committee, consisting of jurisdiction representatives, an SSTAC member, a transit user, and staff from Gold Country Stage and Telecare, is currently working with NCTC staff and LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc. to propose a new location and create a schematic drawing of how the new transfer station will be laid out.



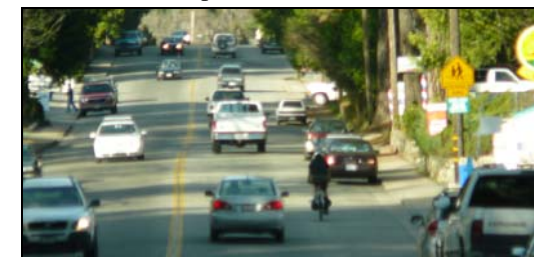
Current Transit Transfer Station at Church and Neal Streets in G.V.

Speed Limits/Speeding: Truckee recently passed a resolution to reclassify all Town-owned streets and take them off the Federal Aid System (FAS). This action is in response to requirements in the State Vehicle Code for streets on the FAS that would require the Town to raise the speed limits on most streets by 5 mph and several by 10 mph. Removing the streets from the FAS will allow the Town to set enforceable speed limits without having to do traffic studies. State Routes 89 and 267, as well as I-80, will remain on the FAS functional classification map.

Nevada County will be installing sixteen radar speed feedback signs at eight locations to promote safer travel speeds. The City of Grass Valley does speed surveys continually throughout the year with a mobile radar trailer to remind motorists of posted limits.

The California Highway Patrol (CHP) has been instrumental in accident reduction on SR 49 with increased speed enforcement efforts that resulted in a 40% decrease of injury/fatal accidents in 2006 as compared to 2005.

Bicyclists were polled in March by NCTC staff at workshops held in western and eastern Nevada County. A bicycle user survey was also made available on the NCTC website and at local bike shops. The cyclists voiced their major concerns as safety related, since many roadways in the county have minimal shoulders and few bike lanes. A Bicycle Master Plan is being created by Alta Planning + Design consultants, as they study Nevada County facilities and address comments made in the poll. A draft report will be available for public review and comment on July 11th.



Bicyclist on Zion Street

Pedestrians have commented on potential hazards in the Grass Valley/Nevada City/Nevada County populated areas where no sidewalks or crosswalks are provided. Disabled citizens in wheelchairs have been observed riding on the streets where no curb cutouts or sidewalks are provided. School children have also resorted to walking in the streets in areas where no sidewalks are provided.

Nevada City is implementing a Paving and Sidewalk Program for 2007 that addresses some of these issues. They recently constructed a sidewalk from the cohousing project into downtown. Local fees and NCTC funds paid for this \$25,000 project. Nevada City will work with Caltrans to modify sidewalks on the Broad Street overcrossing of SR 49 to reduce curb heights, install ADA curb cuts, and add four street lights to illuminate dark pedestrian walkways on both sides of the overpass. Half of the project is in Caltrans right-of-way so they have agreed to pay half of the \$45,000 cost. Some of the paving and sidewalks in the 2007 program will be paid for by funds generated from last November's approved sales tax measure.

Nevada City also has plans to construct sidewalks in the heavily traveled school corridor on Lindley Avenue, between Brock Road and Hoover Lane. Another sidewalk project on Searls Avenue will improve safety for pedestrians and transit users.

The City of Grass Valley is currently building a sidewalk/bike lane facility starting at the Litton Trail on Hughes Road and continuing onto Ridge Road to the corner of Sierra College Drive. The project is scheduled for completion around July 16th. The project cost is approximately \$324,000 and most of the funds are provided by a “Safe Routes to School” grant.



Sidewalk/bike project from Hughes Road to Sierra College Drive

The “Safe Routes to School” funding has been used at several locations throughout the county to install crosswalks and flashing lights in the pavement to notify drivers to be cautious when students are present. The City of Grass Valley and Nevada County have installed these lighted crossings at Nevada Union High School, Hennessy School, and Lyman Gilmore School, and they are pursuing other opportunities in the future at more schools.

The Alta Street sidewalk project in Grass Valley is a joint project between Grass Valley and Nevada County. The City requested Local Transportation Funds (LTF) from their Pedestrian and Bicycle apportionment to reimburse Nevada County their share of one-half the construction costs. The contracted amount of the project is \$243,712. The sidewalk provides safe pedestrian and bicycle access to Mautino Park located on Alta Street.

As you can see, many safety issues have been addressed and many more safety projects are in the planning stages. [NCTC](#)